

Maheu Says Fringe Benefits Kept Him Working for Hughes

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LOS ANGELES, May 22— Robert A. Maheu said today that in the spring of 1970 he wanted to leave Howard R. Hughes's employment, but did not because he liked the perquisites of his job.

Then Mr. Hughes dismissed Mr. Maheu in December, 1970, anyway, and said subsequently in a news conference by telephone that Mr. Maheu "stole me blind" while employed as manager of his Nevada properties. Mr. Maheu sued for \$17.3-million damages and his testimony today in Federal Court was in support of that claim.

Mr. Maheu said that in the spring of 1970 Mr. Hughes retreated from a business commitment and left Mr. Maheu to make the explanations that prompted the desire to leave, he said.

'Why Did You Stay?'

Judge Harry Pregerson, presiding at the trial in Federal Court, asked, "Why did you stay with this man?"

Mr. Maheu said he enjoyed the \$500,000 home that Mr. Hughes provided, the \$10,000 weekly income to his company, Robert A. Maheu Associates and the expense account and other benefits.

"I also stupidly believed I could handle Mr. Hughes's misuse of power," Mr. Maheu said. He said he remembered Mr. Hughes's saying, "I can buy

any man in the world or I can destroy him."

"I didn't believe he could buy me, but I feared he could destroy me," Mr. Maheu said.

Judge Pregerson asked the witness in summary, "you were willing to take the thorns with the roses, is that it?"

"Judge, it turned there weren't many roses," Mr. Maheu replied.

Mr. Maheu is expected to complete his direct testimony tomorrow and begin testimony under cross-examination by attorneys for Summa Corporation, the Hughes holding company that is the defendant in the defamation action.